

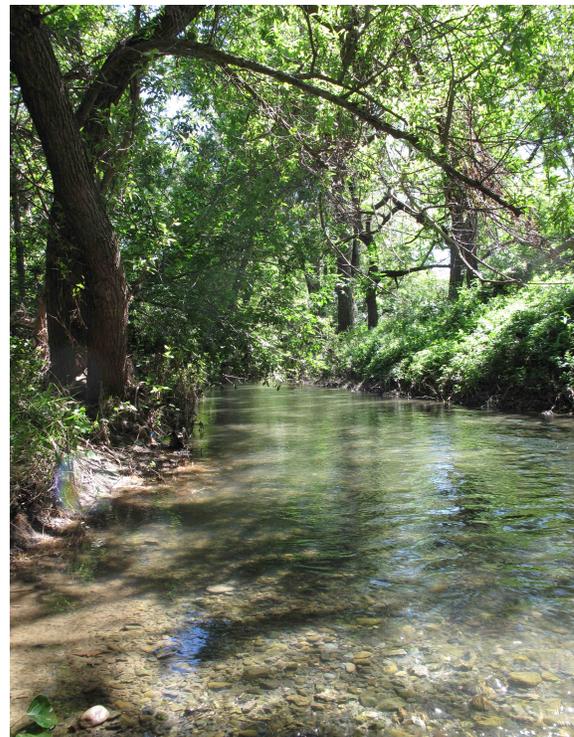
This feasibility study investigated the potential to develop bicycle and pedestrian facilities along approximately four miles of Stevens Creek and the city streets surrounding the stream corridor. The goal of the study was to assess the feasibility of a wide range of potential alignments that could link together existing segments of the Stevens Creek Trail. The cities of Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Los Altos and Cupertino have worked collaboratively to identify options for closing the gap in the Stevens Creek Trail.

Chapter 1 explains the purpose, provides an overview of the study area, summarizes the history and current status of trail planning, introduces the adopted pedestrian and bicycle transportation goals and policies of the four cities, discusses the feasibility study methodology and details the significance and benefits of the trail to the community. The study area reviewed in this feasibility report includes the open space and parklands along Stevens Creek from the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing, the current trail terminus in Mountain View, to Stevens Creek Boulevard where the trail ends in Cupertino. The study also includes the open space lands along Stevens Creek Boulevard and adjacent to Rancho San Antonio County Park. City streets located from Heatherstone Way to Stevens Creek Boulevard and Grant Road to Mary Avenue have also been evaluated as potential routes to link the trail.

The Stevens Creek Trail serves residents and area employees who enjoy spending time in the open space corridor for recreation, alternative commuting and nature appreciation. The communities of Mountain View and Cupertino have celebrated the natural beauty of the stream corridor and invested in habitat restoration and interpretation of these resources concurrent with trail development. Opportunities for additional habitat enhancement are present within this study area.

Eleven city parks, two regional open space facilities, 16 K-12 schools and DeAnza College are located within the study area and would be served by the Stevens Creek Trail. The trail currently connects to the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail providing access to regional open space lands. The trail also provides access to Caltrain and Light Rail in downtown Mountain View providing opportunities for multi-modal commuting. Most users feel proximity to home, the natural scenery and wildlife and connectivity of the route are the best features of the trail. Residents enjoy relaxing walks, conversations with neighbors, fitness runs and time spent in the outdoors on the Stevens Creek Trail.

The feasibility study is the first step in a trail planning process. The next step would involve the development of a trail master plan, which would be evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). All future trail planning and environmental review will provide opportunities for public involvement.



Stevens Creek in Mountain View.

PURPOSE

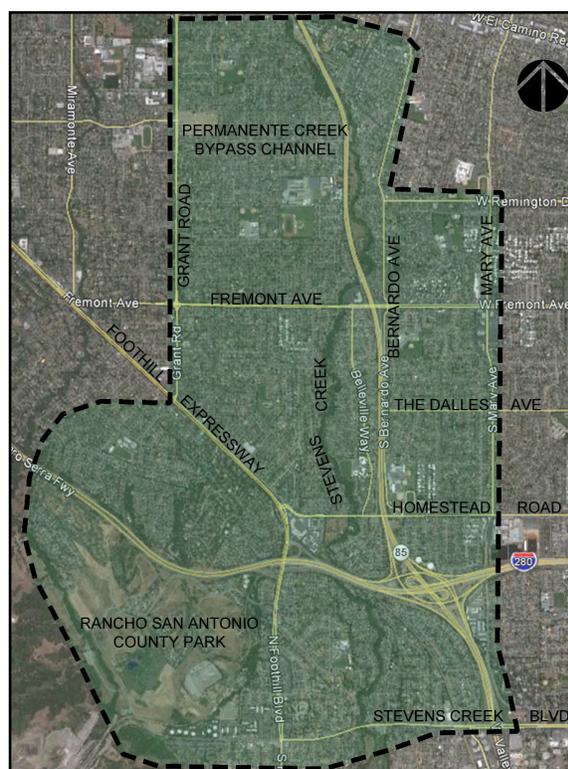
The purpose of the feasibility study is to provide a comprehensive report to the City Councils of Sunnyvale, Cupertino, Los Altos and Mountain View that will assist them in determining next steps in narrowing feasible trail alternatives, selecting a preferred route and coordinating completion of the Stevens Creek Trail. The study reviewed existing trail reports, plans and policies, solicited community opinions and evaluated physical opportunities and constraints to trail development. This report identifies a broad range of trail alternatives based on existing plans and policies, community input, property ownership and physical conditions including biological, geological and hydrological processes of the creek corridor and traffic and circulation patterns of the roadway system. Much of the work undertaken to assess potential routes focused on the technical engineering and environmental challenges presented by the constrained landscape.

REGIONAL SETTING

Stevens Creek is a spring-fed stream that flows northeast from the Santa Cruz Mountains to San Francisco Bay through the cities of Cupertino, Sunnyvale, Los Altos and Mountain View. The area evaluated in this feasibility report includes approximately four miles of the creek corridor from the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing in Mountain View south to Stevens Creek Boulevard in Cupertino. It also includes the open space lands along Stevens Creek Boulevard and adjacent to Rancho San Antonio County Park in Cupertino. Finally, the study evaluates on-street routes within the study area boundaries that extend from Heatherstone Way to the north, Mary Avenue to the east, Grant Road to the west and Stevens Creek Boulevard to the south (See Map 1 - Regional Setting Map). The study area is approximately 3.25 miles north to south and 1.50 miles east to west as the crow flies.

The study area was divided into four study segments to facilitate the presentation of the feasibility findings. The segments vary by length and begin and end at natural termini that are likely to be used in developing future construction phasing limits. The four study segments include:

- ◆ Study Segment 1: Dale Avenue/ Heatherstone Way to Fremont Avenue
- ◆ Study Segment 2: Fremont Avenue to Homestead Road
- ◆ Study Segment 3: Homestead Road to Stevens Creek Boulevard
- ◆ Study Segment 4: Trail Connections to Rancho San Antonio County Park via Stevens Creek Boulevard



Map 1 - Regional Setting Map

WATERSHED SETTING

Stevens Creek is a primary stream originating in the Santa Cruz Mountains draining runoff from a 29-square-mile watershed into South San Francisco Bay. Most of the upper watershed is

undeveloped forest and rangeland that is managed by Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District and Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department. Water is impounded on its 20-mile flow to the Bay at Stevens Creek Reservoir, which is operated by the Santa Clara Valley Water District. The creek extends 12.5 miles below the dam. The creek corridor has been buffered from the full effects of urbanization through thoughtful land use planning and the result of development choices. Land use policies codified in the Cupertino General Plan promoted the acquisition of floodplain lands as open space. These policies minimized the amount of urban development immediately adjacent to the creek corridor in Cupertino. In the downstream communities of Los Altos, Sunnyvale and Mountain View much of the stream corridor was ultimately protected by the construction of State Route 85, which roughly parallels Stevens Creek from Fremont Avenue to US Highway 101 (US 101). The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) purchased large swaths of right-of-way in the 1960s for the development of State Route 85. The excess land was eventually transferred to the City of Mountain View as open space. These land use decisions and policies limited the amount of development that could occur directly adjacent the stream corridor, preserved much of the integrity of the riparian habitat and may have helped to maintain the population of threatened Central California Coast steelhead in Stevens Creek. These land protections, suitable habitat and the year-round presence of steelhead led NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service to designate Stevens Creek as “critical habitat” for the recovery of Central California Coast steelhead.

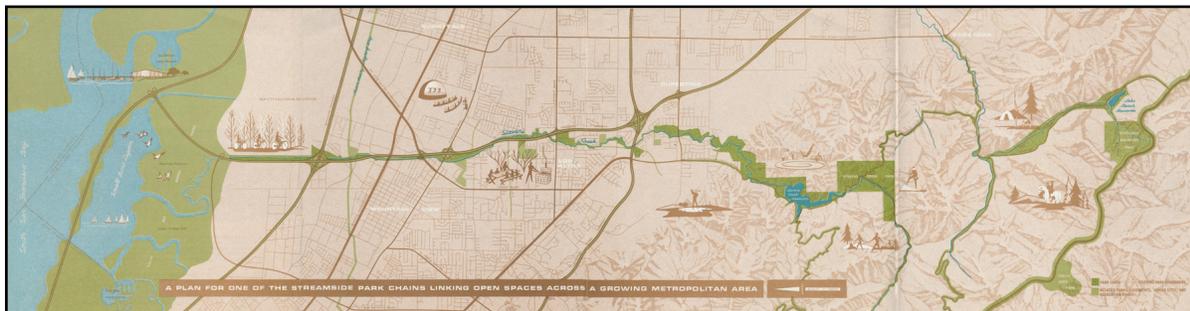
Stevens Creek Dam releases typically maintain surface flow in the channel northward from the reservoir during dry months through a 5.7-mile groundwater recharge area ending at approximately Fremont Avenue. In the two miles immediately below the reservoir, located in Stevens Creek County Park, the creek

passes through two golf courses, McClellan Ranch Preserve and Blackberry Farm Park where incision and entrenchment are low and the inset valley is fairly wide. The dam has reduced gravel loads available to replenish the stream system thereby contributing to creek bed downcutting. Water from Permanente Creek is diverted to Stevens Creek six miles below the reservoir during winter storms. This diversion reduces flooding in the lower Permanente Creek watershed, but increases scour and erosion in lower Stevens Creek. The downstream segments of the creek are steeply incised from lack of upstream sediment as a result of the dam and high peak flows from urbanization, which exacerbate erosion and creek bank slumping. The feasibility of a streamside trail is constrained by these ongoing hydrogeomorphic processes.

**HISTORY OF THE “STEVENS CREEK PARK CHAIN” CONCEPT (1961)
COUNTY OF SANTA CLARA
PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

In 1961, the County of Santa Clara Planning Department prepared the first plan for the “Stevens Creek Park Chain.” This concept plan provided a framework for land preservation and public access along the creek. The plan envisioned that creeks be “preserved in their natural state and augmented by parks and other public open spaces, these creeks can be priceless possessions of the metropolitan area, emerald necklaces of parks and connecting trailways. Along these creek chains one can walk, cycle, or horse-back ride for long distances, protected from automobile traffic (Santa Clara County, 1961, p. 1).”

In the 1960s and 1970s, land along the Valley floor and upper watershed was preserved in response to this concept plan. Santa Clara County acquired properties that have become Stevens Creek County Park and Upper Stevens Creek County Park. The City of Mountain View acquired the excess right-of-way from the construction of SR 85.



The original 1961 Stevens Creek Park Chain Plan (Courtesy of Don Weden).

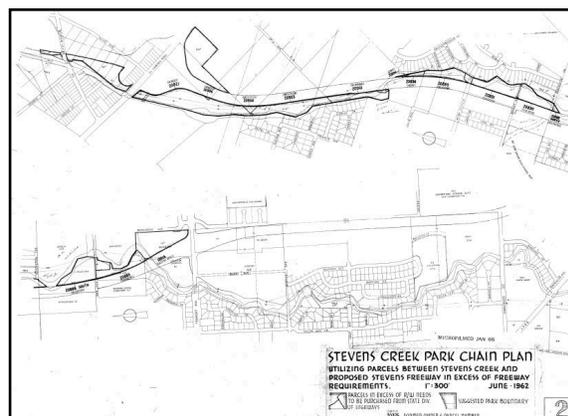
**STEVENS CREEK:
A PLAN OF OPPORTUNITIES (1980)
SANTA CLARA VALLEY WATER DISTRICT,
MIDPENINSULA REGIONAL OPEN SPACE
DISTRICT AND CITY OF MOUNTAIN VIEW**

The 1980 *Plan of Opportunities* evaluated the creek corridor from Homestead Road north to San Francisco Bay. This comprehensive management plan addressed flooding and erosion, biological resources and urban recreational opportunities of the open space lands along Stevens Creek. This plan outlined concepts, goals and management guidelines for preserving and restoring the biological resources while integrating recreational activities at nodes along the park chain that complemented the natural setting of the creek corridor. The report stressed the importance of preserving the natural creek corridor while allowing recreational access to the open space land along the creek. Environmental restoration of the creek corridor was first proposed in this report. Only those recreational uses that would integrate with the natural environment of Stevens Creek were recommended. Walking, jogging, bicycling and nature exploration were defined as appropriate passive recreational uses of the creek corridor.

REGIONAL TRAIL PLANNING EFFORTS

Over the past several decades, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District have acquired open space lands and developed much of the Stevens Creek Trail in the upper watershed. The Tony Look Stevens Creek Trail extends through

Stevens Creek County Park connecting to the Canyon Trail in Upper Stevens Creek County Park. The trail is named for Claude A. “Tony” Look, the late County Parks and Recreation commissioner and executive director and board member of Sempervirens Fund who worked to expand land protection in the Santa Cruz Mountains and encouraged the development of the Stevens Creek Trail until his death in 2006.



Excess lands from the construction of SR 85.

The Stevens Creek Nature Trail begins in the headwaters in Monte Bello Open Space Preserve and links to the Canyon Trail that follows the drainage south toward Saratoga Gap. A segment of trail is missing from the Canyon Trail, although recent acquisitions are helping to close this gap. Eventually, trail users will be able to hike through the entire upper watershed and connect to the Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail via the Table Mountain Fire Road and Saratoga Gap Trail. The Skyline-to-the-Sea Trail extends 29 miles from Saratoga Gap to the Pacific

Ocean at Waddell Creek in Big Basin State Park. When the gaps in the Stevens Creek Trail are completed, trail users will be able to travel from San Francisco Bay to the Pacific Ocean. The passage by voters of 2014 Measure AA - Regional Open Space Access, Preservation and Restoration Bond specifically supports the completion of the Stevens Creek Trail across the valley floor and through the upper watershed as determined by city and neighborhood trail routing solutions. This bond also identifies stream corridor restoration and steelhead habitat enhancement below Stevens Creek Dam as a priority.

PAST CITY TRAIL PLANNING EFFORTS

The four cities have undertaken focused trail planning efforts subsequent to the early regional open space planning reports. These efforts have resulted in the preparation of local trail plans and the construction of approximately five miles in Mountain View and one mile in Cupertino of the Stevens Creek Trail. The focused trail plans include:

- ◆ 1991 Stevens Creek Trail and Wildlife Corridor – Mountain View
- ◆ 1994 Evaluation of Policy and Planning Issues Related to Proposed Stevens Creek Trail as Impacting Sunnyvale – Sunnyvale
- ◆ 2002 Stevens Creek Trail, Reach 4, Segment 2 – Mountain View
- ◆ 2002 Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study – Cupertino
- ◆ 2006 Stevens Creek Corridor Park Master Plan and Restoration Plan – Cupertino
- ◆ 2008 Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study – Los Altos

CURRENT STATUS OF TRAIL DEVELOPMENT

Today, the Stevens Creek Trail extends five miles from San Francisco Bay to the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing in Mountain View and one mile from Stevens Creek Boulevard upstream to McClellan Road. An approximately three-

mile trail gap exists between the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing and Stevens Creek Boulevard. The four cities have each independently adopted plans and integrated goals and policies regarding development of the Stevens Creek Trail into long-range planning documents. The trail plans and policy documents of each city are summarized to provide the context for this feasibility study focused on closing the trail gap across the valley floor.

LOS ALTOS STEVENS CREEK TRAIL FEASIBILITY STUDY (2008)

In 2008, Los Altos studied the feasibility of developing the Stevens Creek Trail through the open space lands north of Fremont Avenue and along city streets through Los Altos. Los Altos selected a preferred route that extended along the creek corridor to Fremont Avenue and Grant Road, but did not adopt this alignment. The route is planned as a Class I multi-use path that parallels these collector streets and is constructed within the public right-of-way. The route jogs west on Fremont Avenue and then extends south and southeast on Grant Road for approximately two miles to connect to Foothill Expressway at Homestead Road/Vineyard Drive. The existing westbound bike lane on the north side of Fremont Avenue and southbound bike lane on the west side of Grant Road are integrated into the new multi-use path in an effort to preserve more oak trees and provide a landscape buffer between the trail and auto traffic. Twelve side streets, two cul de sacs and the driveways to the Woodland Branch Library and Lucky Supermarket intersect the proposed two-mile multi-use path. The 2012 *Los Altos Bicycle Transportation Plan* notes that “The final alignment for this project has not yet confirmed. The Class I pathway is only recommended if it is confirmed to be part of the Stevens Creek Trail or serve as a connector trail (Los Altos, 2012, p. 5-16).”

MOUNTAIN VIEW STEVENS CREEK TRAIL, REACH 4, SEGMENT 2 FINAL EIR (2004)

The most recent trail planning effort by Mountain View culminated in 2004 with the release of the Final Environmental Impact Report for Reach 4, Segment 2. This work reexamined the trail alignment from Yuba Drive to the open space lands south of Dale Avenue and Heatherstone Way. Since 2004, Mountain View has successfully constructed the trail from Yuba Drive to the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing. The final phase is planned to extend from Dale/Heatherstone to Mountain View High School through open space land owned by Mountain View to the east of State Route 85. The trail would extend along the west side of the creek between the soundwall and the top-of-bank until reaching the large meadow. The trail would meander through the meadow to a pedestrian overcrossing spanning State Route 85 and touch down in a city-owned parcel adjacent to Mountain View High School. No funding is currently budgeted for design or construction of this final trail phase. Mountain View is collaborating on this trail feasibility study to identify a final trail alignment that will best serve area residents and users of the Stevens Creek Trail.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN GOALS AND POLICIES OF THE FOUR CITIES

The feasibility study is guided not only by the previous trail planning efforts, but also by the plans and policies of the four cities relative to pedestrian and bicyclist mobility. The adopted general plan, bicycle plan and pedestrian plan goals, policies and strategies that guided the development of the potential Stevens Creek Trail routes are highlighted.

SUNNYVALE GENERAL PLAN (2011)

The City of Sunnyvale recently updated its General Plan. Goals and policies regarding the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists are included in the Land Use and

Transportation Chapter. It should be noted that in 2009, the Sunnyvale City Council revised the 1994 General Plan to strike Policy 2.2.C.5 which opposed development of the Stevens Creek Trail within the creek corridor open space parcels. This action has allowed for a wider range of trail alternatives to be considered between the Dale/Heatherstone pedestrian overcrossing and Fremont Avenue than would have previously been considered. The revised policy states: “Policy LT-9.4 Support a regional trail system by coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions to facilitate trail connections wherever possible (Sunnyvale, 2011, p. 3-43).”

In 2006, Sunnyvale developed Key Initiatives to respond to demands for increased open space and the areas identified as having “service gaps” and being underserved by current open space offerings. These Key Initiatives were further evaluated in the 2009 Parks of the Future Study. The 2006 Key Initiatives and the 2009 Parks of the Future Study identified the goal to “explore the potential for new off-street trails and coordination of on-street bike connections (Sunnyvale, 2011, p. 3-38).”

An additional policy direction incorporated into the 2011 General Plan gives precedence to the movement people over stationary uses (parking) of the roadway system. “Policy LT-5.12 City streets are public space dedicated to the movement of vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Providing safe accommodation for all transportation modes takes priority over non-transportation uses. Facilities that meet minimum appropriate safety standards for transportation uses shall be considered before non-transportation uses are considered (Sunnyvale, 2011, p. 3-23).” Many of Sunnyvale’s General Plan goals and policies support human-powered modes of transportation (*See Figure 1 – Sunnyvale General Plan goals and policies relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities*).

Sunnyvale General Plan Land Use and Transportation Goals and Policies

GOAL LT-5 Effective, Safe, Pleasant and Convenient Transportation

Policy LT-5.5 Support a variety of transportation modes.

LT-5.5a Promote alternate modes of travel to the automobile.

LT-5.5d Maximize the provision of bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

LT-5.5e Implement the City of Sunnyvale Bicycle Plan.

LT-5.5g Ensure safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle connections to neighborhood transit stops.

Policy LT-5.8 Provide a safe and comfortable system of pedestrian and bicycle pathways.

Policy LT-5.9 Appropriate accommodations for motor vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians shall be determined for city streets to increase the use of bicycles for transportation and to enhance the safety and efficiency of the overall street network for bicyclists, pedestrians, and motor vehicles.

Policy LT-5.10 All modes of transportation shall have safe access to city streets.

Policy LT-5.12 City streets are public space dedicated to the movement of vehicles, bicycle and pedestrians. Providing safe accommodation for all transportation modes takes priority over non-transportation uses. Facilities that meet minimum appropriate safety standards for transportation uses shall be considered before non-transportation uses are considered.

Policy LT-5.13 Parking is the storage of transportation vehicles and shall not be considered a transport use.

Policy LT-5.14 Historical precedence for street space dedicated for parking shall be lesser consideration than providing street space for transportation uses when determining the appropriate future use of street space.

GOAL LT-8 Adequate and Balanced Open Space

Policy LT-8.8 Support the acquisition or joint use through agreements with partners of suitable sites to enhance Sunnyvale's open spaces and recreation facilities based on community need and through such strategies as development of easements and right-of-ways for open space use, conversion of sites to open space from developed use of land and landbanking.

Policy LT-8.10 Facilitate and encourage pedestrian traffic in public recreational open spaces and utilize the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority's Authority Pedestrian Technical Design Guidelines whenever appropriate and feasible.

GOAL LT-9 Regional Approach to Open Space

Policy LT-9.2 Support public and private efforts in and around Sunnyvale to acquire, develop and maintain open space and recreation facilities and service for public use.

Policy LT-9.4 Support a regional trail system by coordinating with adjacent jurisdictions to facilitate trail connections wherever possible (See also City of Sunnyvale Bicycle Plan).

Figure 1 – Sunnyvale General Plan goals and policies relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

LOS ALTOS GENERAL PLAN (2002)

The Los Altos General Plan - Circulation Element includes a bikeways map with both existing and proposed Class I bike paths, Class II bike lanes and Class III bike routes. The General Plan includes language that relates to the Stevens Creek Trail. The Circulation Element states that where feasible, paths and trails should be added to City right-of-way to help separate pedestrians and vehicles (*See Figure 2 – Los Altos General Plan goals and policies relating to the movement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities*).

**Los Altos General Plan
Circulation Goals and Policies**

Goal 4 of the Circulation Element states that Los Altos should provide for the convenient and safe movement of bicyclists and pedestrians throughout the City to meet the commuter and recreation needs of the community. Relevant policies to achieve this goal include:

Policy 4.1: Develop and maintain a comprehensive and integrated system of bikeways that promote bicycling riding for commuting and recreation.

Policy 4.2: Provide for safe and convenient pedestrian connections to and between Downtown, other commercial districts, neighborhoods, and major activity centers within the City, as well as within surrounding jurisdictions.

Policy 4.4: Provide trails, sidewalks or separated pathways in areas where needed to provide safe bicycle and pedestrian access to schools.

Policy 4.5: Consider separated bicycle and pedestrian pathways along arterial and collector roadways.

Policy 4.6: Pursue potential rights-of-way such as Santa Clara Valley Water District and other utility easements for bicycle and pedestrian trail development (Los Altos, 2002, pp. 23-24).

Figure 2 – Los Altos General Plan goals and policies relating to the movement of pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

CUPERTINO GENERAL PLAN 2000-2020 (2000)

The 1964, 1972, 1993 and 2000 Cupertino General Plans have supported the acquisition of the lands adjacent to Stevens Creek to preserve the floodplain as open space and to develop an urban trail along the creek corridor. In keeping with this long-range vision, the City of Cupertino purchased McClellan Ranch, Blackberry Farm and Golf Course, the Simms and Stockmeir properties between 1972 and 1999. Cupertino purchased the final floodplain parcel between McClellan Road and Stevens Creek Boulevard, a single-family residence, from a willing seller in 2014.

The Stevens Creek Trail supports City Council goals for enhancing bicycling and walking throughout the community. The trail implements elements of the 2011 Cupertino Bicycle Transportation Plan and 2002 Cupertino Pedestrian Transportation Guidelines. Goals and policies regarding the movement of pedestrians and bicyclists are included in the Circulation and Environmental Resources/Sustainability Elements of the Cupertino General Plan (*See Figure 3 – Cupertino General Plan goals and policies relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities and Figure 4 – Cupertino General Plan goals and policies relating to trails and creeks*).

Cupertino General Plan Circulation Goals and Policies

GOAL C - A Comprehensive Network of Pedestrian and Bicycle Routes and Facilities

Policy 4-3: Cupertino Pedestrian Transportation Guidelines and the Cupertino Bicycle (Cupertino, 2000, pp. 4.7-4.9).

Transportation Plan. Implement the programs and projects recommended in the Cupertino Pedestrian Transportation Guidelines and in the Cupertino Bicycle Transportation Plan, as well as other programs that promote this goal.

Strategies

1. The Pedestrian Guidelines. Implement the projects recommended in the Pedestrian Guidelines including:
 - After engineering review, and where found to be feasible, improve safety at selected intersections by one or more of the following: prohibit right turn- on-red, add time to the pedestrian signal phase, construct a median and/or reduce corner radii.
 - Where feasible provide missing sidewalks on arterial and collector streets and on neighborhood streets as desired by residents.
3. Safe Routes to School. Work with the School Districts to promote the Safe Route to Schools program.
4. Pedestrian Time on Traffic Signals. With engineering review, provide additional time for pedestrians to cross streets at appropriate intersections. Added time would be most appropriate near shopping districts, schools and senior citizen developments. This strategy should be considered even if it could reduce the Level of Service (LOS) for automobile traffic.
5. Pedestrian Improvements. To enhance walking, consider various improvements to roadways to make them more pedestrian friendly and less auto-centric. Where a median is provided, it should be wide enough to safely accommodate pedestrians. Streets such as Homestead, Bollinger, Rainbow, Prospect or Stelling should be evaluated for potential improvements for pedestrians. Working with the neighborhood, consider reducing residential street widths to promote slower traffic and less pervious surface
6. Crosswalk Marking, Medians, and “Chokers.” Following engineering review, mark crosswalks with pavement treatment scaled to the speed of traffic. Use medians and “chokers” to narrow the width of the street where feasible and appropriate.
8. Implementation of the Bicycle Plan. Implement the Bikeway Network as recommended in the Bicycle Plan.
9. Bicycle Facilities in New Developments. Encourage the developers of major new or remodeled buildings to include secure interior and/or fully weather protected bicycle parking.
10. Traffic Calming on Bicycle Routes. Where feasible and appropriate, implement traffic calming on those bicycle routes where automobile traffic volumes are low. Bicycle traffic flows best where automobile traffic volume and speeds are low and where there are no stop signs or traffic signals to hinder through traffic flow.

Policy 4-4: Regional Trail Development Continue to plan and provide for a comprehensive system of trails and pathways consistent with regional systems, including the Bay Trail, Stevens Creek Corridor and Ridge Trail. The General Alignment of the Bay Trail, as shown in the Association of Bay Area Governments’ Bay Trail planning document, is incorporated in the General Plan by reference.

Figure 3 – Cupertino General Plan goals and polices relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

**Cupertino General Plan
Environmental Resources/Sustainability Goals and Policies**

GOAL E – Protection of Special Areas of Natural Vegetation and Wildlife Habitation as Integral Parts of a Sustainable Environment

Policy 5-13: Recreation in Natural Areas (Cupertino, 2000, pp. 5.12-5.13).
Limit recreation in natural areas to activities compatible with preserving natural vegetation, such as hiking, horseback riding, mountain biking and camping.

Policy 5-14: Recreation and Wildlife Trails
Provide open space linkages within and between properties for both recreational and wildlife activities, most specifically for the benefit of wildlife that is threatened, endangered or designated as species of special concern.

Strategy
Require identification of creeks and watercourses on site plans and require that they be protected from adjacent development. State that trail easements for trail linkages may be required if analysis determines that they are needed.

Figure 4 – Cupertino General Plan goals and polices relating to trails and creeks.

MOUNTAIN VIEW 2030 GENERAL PLAN (2012)

The City of Mountain View recently updated its General Plan. Goals and policies regarding the mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists are included in the Mobility and Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities Elements. Enhancing the multi-modal transportation system was identified as a top priority to advance mobility in Mountain View (See Figure 5 – Mountain View General Plan goals and polices relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities). Mobility improvements will target alternative travel modes including shared-use bicycle and pedestrian paths, transit services and corridors, shuttle buses and complete streets designed for all users (Mountain View, 2012, p. 109).

A key strategy identified in the 2030 General Plan for addressing the opportunities and challenges of providing adequate parks, open spaces and community facilities with increasing urbanization as denser housing is built, is the continued expansion of the Mountain View’s trail system (See Figure 6 – Mountain

View General Plan goals and polices relating to parks, open space and trails). The trail system, with emphasis on completion of several trails and links through entry points, pathways and bridges, is identified as a top priority for present and future decision makers (Mountain View, 2012, p. 148).

City of Mountain View Mobility Goals and Policies

“Mountain View’s mobility needs are fulfilled by a range of travel modes—including driving, walking, bicycling and public transit. Streets, sidewalks and trails serve a variety of social, recreational, ecological and accessibility goals. This Mobility Element reinforces the City’s significant long-term strategy to improve access for all means of travel and streets designed for all users (Mountain View, 2012, p. 95).”

Complete Streets

Complete streets policies encourage efficient and attractive streets that consider the needs of diverse members of the community, balance the different modes of transportation, promote physical activity and support environmental sustainability.

Goal MOB-1: Streets that safely accommodate all transportation modes and persons of all abilities.

Policies

MOB 1.1: Multi-modal planning. Adopt and maintain master plans and street design standards to optimize mobility for all transportation modes.

MOB 1.2: Accommodating all modes. Plan, design and construct new transportation improvement projects to safely accommodate the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, motorists and persons of all abilities.

MOB 1.3: Pedestrian and bicycle placemaking. Promote pedestrian and bicycle improvements that improve connectivity between neighborhoods, provide opportunities for distinctive neighborhood features and foster a greater sense of community.

MOB 1.6: Traffic calming. Provide traffic calming, especially in neighborhoods and around schools, parks and gathering places (Mountain View, 2012, p. 110).

Walkability

Walkability policies encourage a livable, healthy, sustainable and connected city with a safe and comfortable pedestrian network among its various neighborhoods, parks, trails, employment centers, community facilities, village centers and commercial areas.

Goal MOB-3: A safe and comfortable pedestrian network for people of all ages and abilities at all times.

Policies

MOB 3.1: Pedestrian network. Provide a safe and comfortable pedestrian network.

MOB 3.2: Pedestrian connections. Increase connectivity through direct and safe pedestrian connections to public amenities, neighborhoods, village centers and other destinations throughout the city.

MOB 3.3: Pedestrian and bicycle crossings. Enhance pedestrian and bicycle crossings at key locations across physical barriers.

MOB 3.5: Walking and bicycling outreach. Actively engage the community in promoting walking and bicycling through education, encouragement and outreach on improvement projects and programs (Mountain View, 2012, p. 111).

Bikeability

Bikeability policies encourage a livable, healthy, sustainable and connected city with adequate bicycle parking and a safe and comfortable network to enhance bicycling as a convenient form of transportation for commute and leisure trips.

Goal MOB-4: A comprehensive and well-used bicycle network that comfortably accommodates bicyclists of all ages and skill levels.

Policies

MOB 4.1: Bicycle network. Improve facilities and eliminate gaps along the bicycle network to connect destinations across the city.

MOB 4.2: Planning for bicycles. Use planning processes to identify or carry out improved bicycle connections and bicycle parking.

MOB 4.3: Public bicycle parking. Increase the amount of well-maintained, publicly accessible bicycle parking and storage throughout the city.

MOB 4.4: Bicycle parking standards. Maintain bicycle parking standards and guidelines for bicycle parking and storage in convenient places in private development to enhance the bicycle network.

MOB 4.5: Promoting safety. Educate bicyclists and motorists on bicycle safety (Mountain View, 2012, p. 111).

Safe Routes to Schools

Safe routes to schools policies protect the safety of schoolchildren and other vulnerable populations. They promote health, environmental sustainability and social interaction. They leverage local, regional and national Safe Routes to Schools Program resources to support increased walking and bicycling to schools.

Goal MOB-6: Safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycling access to schools for all children.

Policies

MOB 6.1: Safe routes to schools. Promote Safe Routes to Schools programs for all schools serving the city.

MOB 6.2: Prioritizing projects. Ensure that bicycle and pedestrian safety improvements include projects to enhance safe accessibility to schools.

MOB 6.3: Connections to trails. Connect schools to the citywide trail systems (Mountain View, 2012, p. 112).

Figure 5 – Mountain View General Plan goals and polices relating to pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Mountain View General Plan Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities Goals and Policies

“Parks and open space, community facilities, recreational programs and the arts are all important to Mountain View. They enhance the city’s neighborhoods and Downtown and offer recreation, social interaction and community-building activities and programs. Parks, open space and natural areas benefit human health and the environment through opportunities for physical exercise and access to nature for people, and habitats for plants and animals (Mountain View, 2012, p. 141).”

Parks and Open Space

Parks and open space policies outline means of acquisition, distribution, design and protection of parks, open space and park facilities.

Goal POS-3: Open space areas with natural characteristics that are protected and sustained.

Policy

POS 3.1: Preservation of natural areas. Preserve natural areas, creeks and Shoreline at Mountain View Regional Park primarily for low-intensity uses. In special circumstances more active uses may be permitted if the overall natural character of the larger area is retained (Mountain View, 2012, p. 149).

Trails

Trails policies encourage recreation, improve health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing active transportation links to neighborhoods, parks, transit and other destinations throughout Mountain View.

Goal POS-6: An integrated system of multi-use trails connecting to key local and regional destinations and amenities.

Policies

POS 6.1: Citywide network of pathways. Develop a citywide network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways to connect neighborhoods, employment centers, open space resources and major destinations within the city.

POS 6.2: At-grade crossings. Minimize at-grade crossings of major roads when building new trails (Mountain View, 2012, p. 150).

Figure 6 – Mountain View General Plan goals and policies relating to parks, open space and trails.

FEASIBILITY STUDY GOALS

Feasibility study goals were derived from the plans and policies of the four cities and served to guide the trail planning process and development of potential trail alignments. The Stevens Creek Trail provides a completely separated pathway for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians with minimal roadway crossings. The trail serves a wide range ability levels and is especially suitable for younger and less experienced bicyclists. Any extension of the trail must strive to offer a similar trail experience.

The Stevens Creek Trail is intended to integrate with the natural environment and

provide recreation and alternative transportation benefits to residents, schoolchildren and local employees. Development of the trail also provides an opportunity to enhance the creek corridor as habitat for wildlife and as a natural open space for trail users in the densely urbanized Bay Area. The trail alignment is to be located on public or quasi-public lands and coordinated with all relevant jurisdictions. The trail alignments have been presented to many audiences and continue to be evaluated during the public review of the feasibility report and any subsequent trail planning efforts and associated environmental documents.

STUDY METHODOLOGY

This feasibility study has been guided by the Joint Cities Working Team and Citizens Working Group. The Joint Cities Working Team was formed as a result of discussions by policy makers and City staff following the completion of a 2008 *Stevens Creek Trail Feasibility Study* by the City of Los Altos. During the discussions facilitated by Mountain View Council Members and staff, the attendees agreed that coordination of trail planning between Mountain View, Sunnyvale, Cupertino and Los Altos can potentially maximize the regional recreational and bicycle commute benefits of the trail. The purpose of the Joint Cities Working Team is to coordinate inter-jurisdictional trail planning. The working team includes an elected official and staff member from each of the four cities along Stevens Creek.

In the fall of 2012, a citizens committee was recruited by the Joint Cities Working Team to assist with the trail planning process. The Citizens Working Group was to provide input on the feasibility study, gather public comments on the trail alignment alternatives and review the draft trail feasibility report. The Citizens Working Group was comprised of residents, trail user group members and environmental organization leaders from the four cities.

The Citizens Working Group began meeting in November 2012 and has worked directly with City staff and the consultant team. The Citizens Working Group has reviewed preliminary feasibility findings and assisted with gathering public comment on the potential trail routes through working sessions and series of community meetings. The analyses supplied by the consultants, reviewed first by the Citizens Working Group and then the Joint Cities Working Team and refined through comments made by community members are included in this report.

A total of 18 working sessions and four community meetings have been held with the Joint Cities Working Team, Citizens

Working Group and the community to gather feedback on the potential trail routes (*See Appendix A – Summary of Meetings*). In addition, numerous technical meetings were also held with regulatory agencies, adjacent landowners and individual stakeholders.

TRAIL PLANNING PROCESS

A feasibility study is the first step in the trail planning process. A trail master plan, with a narrower range of potential trail routes, is then undertaken to more fully develop the alignments. The trail feasibility findings will provide significant background documentation for a trail master plan. A trail master plan process would provide additional opportunities for public input. Ultimately, a trail master plan must be evaluated under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) prior to adoption by governing agencies. All of these trail planning and environmental review efforts will provide opportunities for further public involvement in shaping the future of the Stevens Creek Trail (*See Figure 7 – Trail Planning Process*).

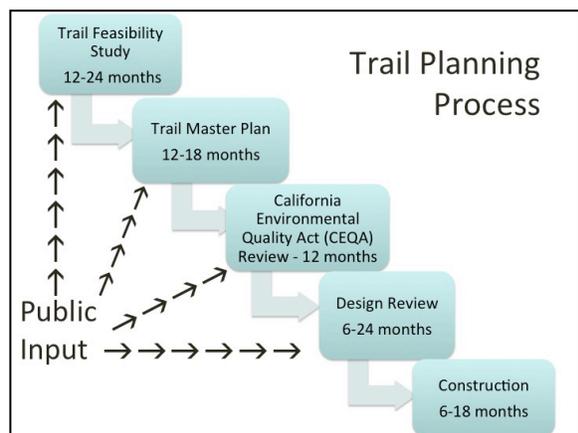


Figure 7 – Trail Planning Process.

TECHNICAL EVALUATIONS

The trail feasibility study began in 2012 with technical evaluations. These feasibility investigations included an assessment of the biological resources, on-street facilities inventory and identification of geotechnical and hydrological constraints associated with the streambanks and bridges spanning Stevens Creek. The results of these technical studies were used to develop engineering solutions at constrained locations and to identify opportunities on the roadway system for extending the Stevens Creek Trail.

The technical evaluations began with a review of background information pertinent to the study area to become familiar with the projects and processes that created the existing opportunities and constraints to trail development. Significant time was spent directly observing field conditions. Site visits were conducted to assess corridor feasibility and gather additional data needed to refine conceptual engineering solutions to constrained areas. During the fieldwork, information was gathered on opportunities and constraints to creek trail development including land availability, roadway and creek crossings, habitat sensitivity and institutional issues associated with land managing agencies. During the fieldwork, information was gathered on the connectivity to the on-street bicycle and pedestrian system and adjacent points of interest along the potential trail routes.

OUTREACH TO AGENCIES

Preliminary trail alignment alternatives were identified and presented to the agencies with jurisdiction along corridor and adjacent lands. Conceptual engineering solutions to constrained areas of the corridor were further evaluated and brought forward for preliminary discussions with impacted agencies including Santa Clara Valley Water District, Caltrans, Cupertino Union School District, Santa Clara County Park and Recreation Department and Santa Clara County Roads

& Airports Department as well as all of the participating cities, which included Sunnyvale, Los Altos, Cupertino and Mountain View. Continued outreach with these agencies will be necessary throughout the trail planning process.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Four community meetings were held to gather input on the preliminary findings and potential trail alignments. The meetings were held in November 2012 and January, February and June 2013. Comments and suggestions from meeting participants were addressed during the meeting, researched and responded to in meeting minutes and incorporated into this report (*See Appendix A – Summary of Public Meetings*).

BENEFITS AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Stevens Creek Trail is used by residents and area employees who enjoy spending time recreating, commuting and observing the flora and fauna of the creek corridor. Eleven city parks, two regional recreation facilities, 16 K-12 schools and DeAnza College are located within the study area and would be served by the Stevens Creek Trail. The trail connects to the San Francisco Bay Trail and the Bay Area Ridge Trail providing access to regional open space lands. The trail provides access to Caltrain and Light Rail in downtown Mountain View providing opportunities for multi-modal commuting (*See Figure 8 – Summary of Parks, Schools and Attractions*).

Extension of the Stevens Creek Trail has the potential to open to the public 22 acres of open space land located between Stevens Creek and State Route 85. This site provides an opportunity to extend the trail south to Fremont Avenue and to enhance the habitat along the creek for wildlife. Public access to these lands would contribute parkland for passive recreation activities (walking, bicycling, jogging, photography and environmental education) that integrate with the creek corridor setting. These lands would provide a nearby amenity in the densely populated urban area.

Summary of Parks, Schools and Attractions				
	Sunnyvale	Los Altos	Cupertino	Mountain View
City Parks and Natural Areas	DeAnza Park Mango Park San Antonio Park	Grant Park	Blackberry Farm Park Mary Avenue Dog Park Memorial Park Somerset Park Varian Park	Cooper Park Cuesta Park
Regional Parks and Trails	Stevens Creek Trail to SF Bay Trail	Rancho San Antonio County Park Rancho San Antonio OSP	Rancho San Antonio County Park Rancho San Antonio OSP	Stevens Creek Trail to SF Bay Trail
Public and Private Schools	Cherry Chase Elementary Cupertino Middle School South Peninsula Hebrew Day School Stratford School Sunnyvale Middle School West Valley Elementary	Monarch Christian School Montclair Elementary Oak Elementary St. Simon Elementary	De Anza College Garden Gate Elementary Homestead High School Stevens Creek Elementary	Alta Vista High School Mountain View High School
Transit	VTA Bus Route 53	VTA Bus Routes 51 and 55	VTA Bus Routes 23, 51 and 53	Caltrain VTA Light Rail VTA Bus Route 51
Other Attractions	US Post Office	Foothill Crossings Shopping Center Woodland Branch Library Woodland Plaza Commercial District	Blackberry Farm Golf Course Cupertino Senior Center The Oaks Shopping Center US Post Office	El Camino Hospital

Figure 8 – Summary of parks, schools and attractions within the study area.

INCLUSION IN REGIONAL TRAIL PLANS

Stevens Creek was first identified as a regional recreation asset more than 50 years ago and was included in the Regional Parks, Trails and Scenic Highways Element of the Santa Clara County General Plan. Today, the Stevens Creek corridor is identified as a sub-regional trail (Route S-2) in the 1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan and significant portions of the trail have been developed by the City of Mountain View, City of Cupertino, Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

The *1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan* defines three types of trails: regional, sub-regional and connector trails. These definitions specify the purposes served by the various trail types. The Stevens Creek Trail is a sub-regional trail identified as Route S-2 (See *Figure 9 – 1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan Definitions*).

The Stevens Creek Trail is recognized by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) as a connector trail to the San Francisco Bay Trail Plan (ABAG, 1989). The inclusion of the Stevens Creek Trail in many regional and local plans further points to its significance as a recreation and alternative transportation corridor and as an open space resource in north Santa Clara County.

The Stevens Creek Trail connects to the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in Cupertino. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was placed on the National Trail System Map in 1996. This federally recognized historic trail commemorates the 1775-1776 expedition led by Juan Bautista de Anza, which established an overland route for the Spanish. The route extends through two states and today includes both bicycling and hiking trails and an auto route. Juan Bautista de Anza's expedition camped in Cupertino and first sighted San Francisco Bay from a prominent knoll in Rancho San

Antonio County Park (Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail Comprehensive Management and Use Plan, 1996). A 2.3-mile section of the Anza Trail is located within Rancho San Antonio County Park. The trail features the location in which Anza and his expedition first spotted the San Francisco Bay, a knoll between the Permanente Creek and Stevens Creek watersheds.

CONNECTIONS TO CITY PARKS, RECREATION FACILITIES AND ATTRACTIONS

Locally, the Stevens Creek Trail will provide children and families with improved access to 11 city parks located within the study area. The trail could also provide improved bicycle and pedestrian access to Rancho San Antonio County Park and Open Space Preserve. The trail could facilitate bicycling and walking to local shops, restaurants, post offices and libraries along the route.

TRANSPORTATION BENEFITS

The Stevens Creek Trail will enhance walkability and expand the alternative transportation opportunities for residents, students and employees. Intermodal commute opportunities will be created through connections to Caltrain and Light Rail in downtown Mountain View and to the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) bus routes. All VTA buses are now equipped with bicycle racks. This will facilitate bus-bike trips to and from work and school. The Stevens Creek Trail will connect to three VTA bus routes. The bus lines that connect with the Stevens Creek Trail include Routes 23, 51 and 53. The trail may also facilitate the development of Safe Routes to Schools by linking 16 K-12 schools and DeAnza College.

Santa Clara County Trail Definitions

Regional Trail Routes are those trails of National, State or regional recreation significance. In all cases, Regional trail routes extend beyond the borders of Santa Clara County. Regional Trails are generally envisioned as shared-use trail routes in that they would accommodate a variety of trail users. In some instances, where topography and other physical constraints dictate, separate trails along the same general trail route may be needed to accommodate different users.

Sub-Regional Trail Routes are those that in some way:

- ◆ Provide regional recreation and transportation benefits such as providing key links for accessing rail stations, bus routes or park-and-ride facilities;
- ◆ Provide for continuity between cities; generally crossing a city or passing through more than one city; or
- ◆ Provide convenient long-distance trail loop opportunities by directly linking two or more Regional Trail to create an urban trail network.

Connector Trail Routes are those that:

- ◆ Form convenient means of access and linkages from urban areas, developed areas, and public lands within the county to the primary trail network of Regional and Sub-Regional Trails.

Figure 9 – 1995 Santa Clara Countywide Trails Master Plan Definitions (County of Santa Clara, 1995, pp. 40-46).

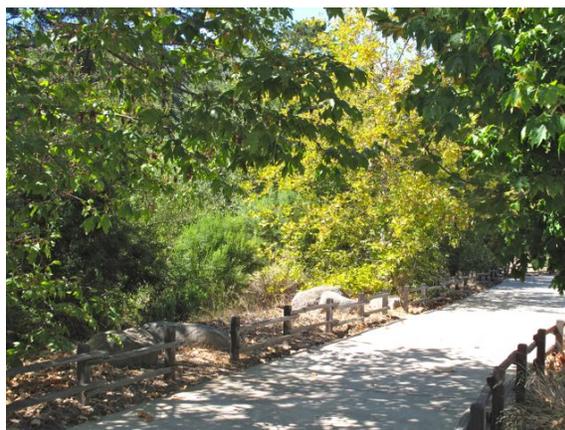
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

Environmental conditions along the corridor should be enhanced by development of the trail. Trail projects provide opportunities to restore habitat resources and decrease dependency on the automobile as a primary form of local transportation. Construction of the trail should include installation of native plants to increase habitat complexity for wildlife and to create an inviting place in which to recreate and commute on foot and by bicycle.

ENHANCEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

The Stevens Creek corridor offers a rare setting where visitors can connect to the natural world within a densely developed urban center. The riparian and wetland habitats along Stevens Creek should be preserved and enhanced for wildlife. The addition of native flora would enhance the integrity and biodiversity of the habitat. All trail construction projects should include a habitat enhancement component that includes native plant landscaping,

irrigation, maintenance and monitoring to ensure that the goal of enhancing the creek corridor is being achieved simultaneously with development of the trail.



Stevens Creek Trail through Cupertino.

IMPROVED AIR QUALITY

The Stevens Creek corridor offers an opportunity to extend the trail through open space lands that are separated from the roadway system. These types of bicycling facilities support bicyclists of all ability levels and may therefore encourage an increase in bicycling and walking. As part of the 2010 Mountain View Pedestrian Master Plan process, a pedestrian and bicycle activity survey was conducted to clarify current usage and demand, establish a baseline in order to measure future progress, and apply for funding for infrastructure improvements. Trail use on the Stevens Creek Trail was assessed on two weekend days in May 2010. A total of 1,468 trail users (822 bicyclists and 646 pedestrians) passed by West Evelyn on May 1 and 1,220 trail users (681 bicyclists and 539 pedestrians) passed by Moffett Boulevard on May 8 (Mountain View, 2010, pp. 5-7). These figures provide one snapshot of trail use from the downstream end of the trail corridor near the North Bayshore high technology employment center.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) suggests that construction of an efficient bicycle and

pedestrian circulation system can decrease dependence on the automobile by 2%. Development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities is often recommended as one strategy to mitigate the air quality impacts of large-scale development projects (BAAQMD, 2005). BAAQMD, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), has established Transportation Control Measures (TCM) as part of a broad strategy to make progress toward meeting State ozone standards. These TCMs will also help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The TCM measure listed below will be implemented by closing the gap in the Stevens Creek Trail (BAAQMD, 2005, pp. D-15 – D-19, D-27 – D-32, D-64 – D-66).

- ◆ TCM 5 – Improved Access to Rail and Ferries
- ◆ TCM 9 – Improve Bicycle Access and Facilities
- ◆ TCM 10 – Youth Transport
- ◆ TCM 19 – Improve Pedestrian Access and Facilities

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